

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

USDEL SALT TWO UNN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11777

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UN, CH, UR, US

SUBJ: GROMYKO UNGA SPEECH: DISARMAMENT

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: USUN 3412 (NOTAL)

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1. GROMYKO'S 1973 UNGA SPEECH ONCE AGAIN REVEALS

SOVIET FLAIR FOR GRANDSTANDING IN SECURITY-DISARMAMENT FIELD, PROMPTED IN PART BY TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF OUT-MANEUVERING PEKING. FOLLOWING ARE COMMENTS ON MAIN SOVIET PROPOSALS.

2. MILITARY BUDGETS: PROPOSAL FOR CUTTING MILITARY BUDGETS BY 10 PERCENT IS NOT NEW. IT HAS ANTECEDENTS IN SOVIET PROPOSALS TO UNGA IN 1961-62, AND WAS MORE RECENTLY BOOSTED AS PART OF BREZHNEV'S "PEACE PROGRAM" AT 24TH PARTY CONGRESS IN MARCH 1971. EFFORT TO ATTRACT THIRD WORLD SUPPORT BY OFFERING TO DIVERT PART OF SAVINGS TO NEEDS OF LDC'S IS, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, A NEW WRINKLE.

3. WE AGREE WITH USUN (REFTEL) THAT SOVIETS HAVE BEEN STUNG BY CHINESE CRITICISM OF DETENTE AS A GREAT-POWER PHENOMENON YIELDING LITTLE BENEFIT TO THIRD WORLD. MOREOVER, SOVIETS ARE UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE -- ESPECIALLY AFTER ALGIERS -- THAT THIS THIRD WORLD VIEW IS BY NO MEANS IMPORTED FROM PEKING. IN A TACTICAL SENSE, THEREFORE, GROMYKO'S PROPOSAL HAS THE TWIN ADVANTAGE OF COMBATING THE CHINESE AND CATERING TO LDC'S. SUBSTANTIVELY, THERE IS LITTLE RISK FOR MOSCOW IN THE PROPOSAL, BOTH BECAUSE IT IS UNLIKELY TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE BY ALL OTHER PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SC (A PRECONDITION POSED BY GROMYKO) AND BECAUSE THE STATED SOVIET MILITARY BUDGET IS AN EXERCISE IN SLEIGHT-OF-HAND.

4. IT IS TEMPTING TO CONCLUDE THAT MOSCOW SEES ITS PROPOSAL MAINLY AS A PROPAGANDA PLOY, BUT THIS MAY UNDERESTIMATE IMPORTANCE SOVIETS ATTACH TO WESTERN MILITARY BUDGETS AS A BAROMETER OF POLITICAL INTENTIONS, NOT TO MENTION SOVIET DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PRESSURES FOR SOME DIVERSION OF SPENDING AWAY FROM MILITARY PURPOSES. EMBASSY THEREFORE FAVORS A RESPONSE TO SOVIET PROPOSAL WHICH, WHILE RAISING ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS OF BUDGET DEFINITION AND VERIFICATION OF REDUCTIONS, DOES NOT DISMISS SOVIET PROPOSAL OUT OF HAND.

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5. ADHERENCE TO PNW AGREEMENT PRINCIPLES: GROMYKO STATEMENT THAT USSR WOULD WELCOME ADHERENCE OF OTHER STATES TO PRINCIPLES FIXED IN U.S.-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR RENEWS A PROPOSAL MADE PUBLICLY FOLLOWING BREZHNEV VISIT. UNLIKE APPROACH MADE SUBSEQUENTLY TO UK (AND PERHAPS OTHERS) IN PRIVATE, GROMYKO SIDESTEPED PROBLEM OF AGREEMENT'S LACK OF ACCESSION CLAUSE BY URGING ADHERENCE TO

PRINCIPLES RATHER THAN ACCESSION. BY THIS PROPOSAL, SOVIETS APPARENTLY HOPE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES FROM CHARGES OF GREAT-POWER MONOPOLY, AND TO EXPAND FORMAL CONSULTATION OBLIGATIONS IN EVENT OF INTERNATIONAL CRISIS. WE SUSPECT THAT AN UNDERLYING SOVIET MOTIVE IS TO REDUCE THEIR ISOLATION SHOULD CONFLICT LOOM WITH CHINA, AND THEREBY TO IMPROVE THEIR POLITICAL ABILITY TO DETER SUCH A CONFLICT.

6. NQN-USE OF FORCE: IN A VARIATION ON AN OLD THEME, GROMYKO EXPRESSED SOVIET READINESS TO UNDERTAKE OBLIGATIONS IN AN APPROPRIATE WAY ON NON-USE OF FORCE, INCLUDING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WITH ALL NUCLEAR POWERS. EMPHASIS ON ALL NUCLEAR POWERS IS CLEARLY AN EFFORT TO INVOLVE CHINA, DESPITE PRC ANTIPATHY TO SOVIET NUF PROPOSAL IN LAST YEAR'S UNGA AND REBUFF OF SIMILAR BILATERAL PROPOSALS ADVANCED IN 1971 AND JUNE 1973.

7. WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE:
REFLECTING SOVIET CONCERN THAT THIRD WORLD FRUSTRATIONS IN DISARMAMENT FIELD SHOULD BE ASSUAGED, GROMYKO SOUGHT TO RESPOND TO VIEWS HELD BY U.S. AND OTHERS THAT LARGE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WOULD BE UNWIELDY AND WDC MIGHT HAMPER BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS. HE SUGGESTED THAT WDC COULD GO ON FOR MONTHS OR EVEN YEARS, AND MAINTAINED THAT LARGE FORUM WOULD REINFORCE MORE RESTRICTED FORUMS. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, GROMYKO'S REMARKS SIMPLY PROVIDE FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT SOVIETS DO NOT ENVISAGE WDC AS A SERIOUS BODY, BUT RATHER AS AN ESCAPE VALVE. BEING OPEN TO ALL COUNTRIES, WDC WOULD ALSO FORCE PEKING'S HAND IN DISARMAMENT FIELD.

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